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18 March 2004



Hon. Vernon Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Rwy --
Exemption -- in Franklin and Webster Counties
NE, AB 6 (Sub-no. 400X)
expeditious action requested

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

MAR 19 2004

Dear Mr. Williams:

Nebraska Trails Foundation, Inc. (NTF), ^{Part of} ~~Public Record~~ with the concurrence of Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), hereby requests a further 180 day extension in the negotiation period provided under the Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) already issued in this proceeding.

The original NITU was served on April 3, 2003. By decision served September 29, 2003, the negotiation period was extended until March 28, 2004. The parties have recently reached an oral agreement in principle at the staff level for the major terms for the railbanking of the line in question, but require further time to reduce the agreement to writing and to obtain requisite intra-corporate approvals. This work should be accomplished within the next 180 days.

In order to facilitate completion of the railbanking negotiation and agreement, NTF, with the concurrence of BNSF, hereby requests an extension of the NITU through and including September 24, 2004 (which we calculate to be 180 days from March 28, 2004).

NTF requests action on this extension request on or before March 28 in order to avoid questions about lapse of the NITU.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,


Charles H. Montange
for Nebraska Trails Foundation,
Inc.

cc. Sarah W. Bailiff, Esq. (BNSF-Law) (by fax to 817-352-2397)
Richard Batie (BNSF-Shortline Dev.) (by fax to -7938)
Ross Greathouse (NTF) (by fax to 402-420-7712)